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Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1	Sept. 11	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("t'sadaya").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gai").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Bäal")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dammära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqut'atash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
to	to						
Mäskäräm 30	Oct. 10						
Teqemt 1	Oct. 11	sunny growing & ripening season (ämmänä sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("gebs"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("t'illa"); sell honey to make mead ("t'äj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Teqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebel" holy wells and waterfalls of Zäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abe).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gur-amaroosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jarusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Teqemt 23rd).
to	to						
Teqemt 30	Nov. 9						

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "tyĕff" for bread; "nug" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwusqwam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Zion" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tatteoing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.	
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "tyeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Qulubi near Dire Daua. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledät", or "Gänna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gänna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).	19th: Emp. Haile Selassai travels to Qulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.
Ter 1 Ter 30	Jan. 9 Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bälg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shenbera), plant (gomän) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Temqät"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gezrät"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Astäryo Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("guga") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary school Epiphany, Jan. 19th Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrär") among Falashas as harvest fest. 12th Monday Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in traditional costume.

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Yäkatit I to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("abed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day Fast of Niniwah ("Tsomä Nänäwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit I to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" =(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("hamamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent, "seqlät" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fassika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tensaä") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("mäsläs bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: dead-wood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "senre" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, outdoor picnic, under "dass" shelter 24th: "Täklä Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Däbrä Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while older ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
Säny 1 to Säny 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Kerämt" begins: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then tyeff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Paräqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "tsomä hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "erf mätay", with fried fish, beer, "azmari" music, and "hotu" dance. Mutual aid in hut-repair.	
Hamlë 1 to Hamlë 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July23) Birthday ("Ledät") of Emp. Haile Selassie; praise hymns chanted in churches.

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Nahasē 1 to Nahasē 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of ṭyōff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debrē Tabor") feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger children badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his namesake; flags, etc.
Pagumen 2	Sept. 6 7	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Nägadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", cereli; baths.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	
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241 Since agriculture is a major concern, much of the annual cycle of activities is centered around it. With the onset of the light rains, fields left fallow the years before are redistributed among the members of the extended family of those who work the land. Fathers allocate fields to their newly married sons or to those who have an added child. The matted grass is plowed before the rains start--"türättärä--plowing to kill the weeds in the sun; then a second, third, fourth time at right angles--"gämmäsä", "däggämä", "sälläsä". Then the turf is piled, dried and burned. The land is now ready, "masa" land", and when puffy clouds appear over the horizon in the morning, the farmer takes his plow to the field for rains will surely follow in the afternoon.

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407 The plow is one-handed, derived from the ancient Middle East. The yoke, about 5 feet in length and 3-4" thick ("qämbär") is lowered behind the humps of two oxen. The plowpoint, held in place by two vertical wedges, is attached to the central stick, "manäqo". At first this plow, which is little more than a converted digging stick dragged at an angle, penetrates less than 6 inches, but after about 5 replowings, as deeply as one foot. The plowpoint is flat and cannot turn the earth.

241 Major procedures fall into the following categories:

preliminary plowing - "tällämä", cutting field into furrows, preparatory to seeding. Plow is led around large rocks and ignores small ones, so that

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neighbouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said; and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1] and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to sell them. And because in this country the winters are divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow except with the rains, they go to sow these millet fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the months of February, March, and April. There is this same winter in a mountain called Lama, in this kingdom of the Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lordship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these winters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever she went to take the communion, and even she does not now enter the church, but takes the communion at the door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based ingredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

There is also danger from animals, the vicious and often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for